

# FREE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH.

Volume I.

LOUISVILLE, KY., THURSDAY OCTOBER 5, 1865.

Number

Has all Honor been Quenched in the Central Church, Chicago?

We are led to ask this question from a circumstance which has called forth a good deal of comment in the Northern papers, both religious and secular, and a glorification has been made over what turns out to be a fabrication, or as a friend expresses it, a pious fraud.

It seems that Rev. John W. Pratt, a Presbyterian minister from Alabama, recently visited the North, and was invited to preach in Chicago, by the veritable Fred. Brown, D.D., alias Paul the Apostle, in the opinion of the Chicago pastor. This minister from the South made his visit in July, which was not a great while after the General Assembly had given directions as to the proper treatment of Southern ministers, and of course it would be expected that Fred. Brown, D.D., would comply with the requirements of the General Assembly, and give no countenance to a "rebel" preacher, until he had fully satisfied him that he was a repentant one. It was, therefore, necessary that a story should be trumped up to satisfy Northern Christians (?) that the Assembly had acted wisely in its method of dealing with Southern ministers; that it would at once bring them to repentance, and this was a striking illustration of its potency in bringing this haughty rebel preacher to confession. So a "correspondent" is at once employed to send a batch of silly nonsense to the Cincinnati Gazette, and thence to be published to the world, that Dr. Pratt, a Presbyterian minister from the South, had made a full confession of his guilt and the guilt of the Southern people in their attempt to establish a confederacy.

But the most amazing thing of all is, that Dr. Fred. Brown had not in his church a man with honesty enough to contradict a statement which every person who heard Dr. Pratt preach, knew to be untrue. It could hardly be expected that Dr. Fred. Brown would contradict such a slander, but that there should not be one person in his church who had manliness enough to contradict the slander, reveals a sad condition of things, and shows that in that congregation all honor has indeed been quenched.

It will be seen by the letter of Dr. Pratt, that this slander followed him to his home, and which he is compelled to contradict himself, through the secular press. This is a repetition of Dr. Palmer's case, in New Orleans. We have received a letter from a friend, who states to us that Dr. Palmer says that the Boston correspondent's statement is a falsehood from first to last.

Who is safe from the foul slander of these correspondents, when such statements are allowed to go uncontradicted by those who know that they are false? We publish the letter of Dr. Pratt, and trust that those who have published the "correspondent's" statement will give it a place in their columns; and we think it ought to be a caution to ministers from the South to be more careful how they allow themselves to fall into the hands of such men as Dr. Fred. Brown, of Chicago:

**Letter from Rev. J. W. Pratt.**  
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA, Aug. 30, 1865.  
*To the Editor of the Register & Advertiser:*

DEAR SIR.—In your issue of the 6th inst, I find a paragraph respecting myself, copied from the Cincinnati Gazette, purporting to be a true statement of the circumstances attending my preaching in the church of Rev. Dr. F. T. Brown, in Chicago, on the 16th of July last.

After correctly reporting the substance of Dr. Brown's remarks in introducing me, and the cordial welcome given to me by his entire congregation, the correspondent says: "In his sermon he said,

"I was honest; I thought we were right; and put all my money, power and influence into the Confederacy. But the Confederacy is gone; the theory of secession is exploded; slavery is dead, and I am content. God saw that we needed punishment and discipline, and has disciplined and punished us; we think we shall now be a better, higher, and more progressive people hereafter."

Now, Mr. Editor, I uttered no such words. If there is anything I abhor, it is the dragging into the pulpit of any topic in the remotest manner connected with politics; and still more, anything connected with the preacher himself. The sermon I preached was first delivered in the Presbyterian Ch.

For the Free Christian Commonwealth.  
The New York Observer.

The Observer has taken sides against the persecution in Missouri. We are not disposed to conceal our joy that it has done so. At the same time, we feel that some of its words are feeble, rather based upon what it deems expediency than founded upon right. It is to be hoped that when the Observer has a full appreciation of the real nature and significance of this matter, its language will be stronger and its positions more impregnable.

The Observer says if we were ministers in Missouri, we would have taken the oath, and protested against the right of government to exact it. This it deems to have been the wisest course. This is just what those have done who can discover no infringement of right—who hold that the arguments to sustain the British Parliament in controlling the Church of England have never been satisfactorily answered, and that it is an unsettled question whether the Presbyterians of Scotland were justified in resisting the encroachments of the crown.

This did this from policy and fear of their congregations, and had such examples been followed, from any suggestions of earthly wisdom, the cause would have been surrendered, and refusal to take the oath would not have excited the fears of the Observer, that it may lead to a war, compared to which, the one just ended will be peace.

The Observer says it has not seen the oath, but understands there is no harm in it. We advise the editor to get it and study the application that is sought to be made of it. He will discover it to be something more than a test to determine the condition on which a man may hold and exercise the office of a minister. Viewed in this light simply, he says, the moment such a right is claimed our religious liberties are struck down, and we are at the mercy of the political majority of every Legislature. What will he say when he discovers that it is also the test of civil rights and immunities?

The Observer also remarks, that in no part of the country does the question of religious liberty appear to be so imperfectly understood as in Missouri. This were true if all knowledge were confined to such of its correspondents as think that past disloyalty of ministers justifies interference with the churches. But this is far from being the case. It will soon be manifest, if it is not so already, that we know our rights, and are determined to maintain them. We shall be glad to have the countenance of the friends of religious liberty everywhere, but even without it, we are prepared to endure whatever may be necessary, and shall rejoice if persecutions, trials and imprisonments arouse such general indignation as shall prevent similar tyranny in other sections.

The Observer bases its fears of war, upon the course adopted by the Bishop of St. Louis. This is a poor foundation. We know that Bishops and Priests are but timid folk, and it is doubtful if the Bishop had issued his circular but for the stand made by the Presbyterians and other Protestants in behalf of religious liberty. If war ensue, it will be because the enemies of national rights shall be numerous and daring enough to resist the Constitution of the United States as the paramount law of the land.

We call the attention of the Observer to events now transpiring in our courts. The Judge of the criminal court of St. Louis, made an order prohibiting lawyers that had not filed the oath, from practicing in his court, and is now listening to arguments on a motion to re-instate it. On the one side it is argued that the law demanding an oath conflicts with Sec. 10, Art. 1, Constitution of the United States, in these words: No State shall pass any ex post facto law, or law impairing the obligation of contracts.

And also, that portion which guarantees trial by jury, and a republican form of Government. Our space does not allow us to detail these arguments. When the counter s

the house of God, and denied to others the wide liberty they demanded for themselves.

We have penned the above in no fault-finding spirit. We repeat, we are glad the Observer has done as much as it has. We hope, however, it will go farther, and denounce the persecution in Missouri in unmeasured terms, giving Protestants the credit they are entitled to for resisting it.

ST. LOUIS.

For the Free Christian Commonwealth.  
"As well expect the Mississippi to turn its course Northward as the General Assembly to recede."

So the strategists of the Western Presbyterian assure the world, in response to the action of the Louisville Presbytery, in their issue of Sept. 14th. Whether this opinion is given upon "principle or upon strategy," we are unable to determine. Considering, however, the zeal with which the Western Presbyterian has all along been laboring to persuade us that after all, the Assembly did not mean any thing by its utterances, we are inclined to interpret the editors strategically in this case, and as meaning simply to discourage the Louisville Presbytery in their efforts for reform.

But that as it may, this metaphor of the Mississippi, as a type of unchangedness, is certainly a singular one every way. True the general current of the Presbyterian Church in all ages, like that of the Mississippi, is in the same direction. But it is difficult to find a more striking type of the fickleness and changeableness which error and fanaticism impart to the movement of the church, than the great American river, which not only "boxes the compass" in its course, within the distance of a few miles, but so perpetually changes its channel, that the pilot who this year undertakes to run the same channel as last year, finds himself high and dry upon a sand bar, or his boat spitted upon a "sawyer;" and is coolly reminded, that was the channel last year but not now. Nor is it difficult to point out any period in the history of the church wherein the turbid overflows of fanaticism have so completely reversed the course of the ecclesiastical current and changed the channel, as within the past four years.

The ecclesiastical Mississippi has, undoubtedly, by a very sharp turn, "changed its course Northward" within the last few years. Even the Danville strategists, who labor to persuade us that we are still running in the old direction, and should steer the same channels, cannot but admit that during the late floods ecclesiastical, many large and luxurious banks have caved in, on one side, and many bars have been formed on the other.

Now, we cannot understand why, if this Mississippi current has been changed so remarkably to the Northward, by the overrunning of the Bishop of St. Louis. This is a poor foundation. We know that Bishops and Priests are but timid folk, and it is doubtful if the Bishop had issued his circular but for the stand made by the Presbyterians and other Protestants in behalf of religious liberty. If war ensue, it will be because the enemies of national rights shall be numerous and daring enough to resist the Constitution of the United States as the paramount law of the land.

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That a posse principi-

tents of the church in Kentucky four years ago, and three-fourths of the church in Kentucky still. That they sold themselves, and deliberately plotted by "strategy," to sell the Kentucky Church to the Northern Apostates. Such men talking now of schism!! They need not be uneasy.

#### A Progressive Catechism.

An enterprising firm, in the city of brotherly love, and of those loving brothers, Musgrave and Janeaway, intimated recently the possible forthcoming of a new Catechism.

From information in our possession, we have not the least particle of doubt that this new book will be fully "up to the times," side by side with the "deliverances on doctrine, loyalty and freedom," and a long way ahead of our present Catechisms, which must soon be consigned, in company with Dr. Wood's fossil, "Old and New Theology," to the care of the antiquary.

That our readers may share the enthusiasm of our own anticipations, and be on the qui vive for the appearance of this novelty, we give, unsolicited, the following as a specimen of what may be expected:

Question. What are the means of grace?

Answer. The Bible is one of them.

Q. Is the whole Bible a means of grace?

A. No—only those parts which each man likes.

Q. What portions do you like, and which are therefore means of grace to you?

A. All of it, except those passages which sanction slavery, and teach the eternity of punishment, and insist on faith in Jesus in order to salvation.

Q. Is there any other means of grace?

A. Yes. Sharp's rifles.

Q. Is there any other?

A. Yes. Political sermons.

Q. Can you mention another?

A. Yes. The Pennsylvania Railroad.

Q. What proof is there that the Pennsylvania Railroad is a means of grace?

A. The Editor of the Presbyterian Standard says so.

N. B. Applications for "Progressive Catechism," may be addressed to Messrs. Nevin and Taylor, Presbyterian Standard Office, Philadelphia, Penn.

For the Free Christian Commonwealth.

#### Ecclesiastical Nomenclature.

MESSRS. EDITORS: The marvelous doings of the last four years in the Protestant Churches seem to have effaced all the ancient landmarks that distinguished between the different views and policy of parties in all the Protestant Churches. The distinction of High Church and Low Church, Conservative and Radical, and even Old School and New School no longer express the issues which now agitate the Churches. In

the all-absorbing political and military issues to which the Churches have been devoting their chief attention, High Church and Low Church are found standing upon the same platform. The Vintons, the Coxes, the Tyngs speak the same "Loyal" and Humanitarian language. The Conservatives and Radicals, and even Old School and New School no longer express the issues which now agitate the Churches. In the all-absorbing political and military issues to which the Churches have been devoting their chief attention, High Church and Low Church are found standing upon the same platform. The Vintons, the Coxes, the Tyngs speak the same "Loyal" and Humanitarian language. The Conservatives and Radicals, and even Old School and New School no longer express the issues which now agitate the Churches. In

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## Free Christian Commonwealth.

Conducted by an Association of Ministers.

A. DAVIDSON, Agent and Publisher.

LOUISVILLE, KY., THURSDAY, OCT. 5, 1865.

Declaration and Testimony of Louisville Presbytery and others against Erroneous and Heretical Doctrines current in the Presbyterian Church.

In our last issue, we laid before our readers in full, by means of a supplement to this very important document, the "Act and Testimony" of 1837, which is the counterpart, and in connection with which it testifies against the assumptions introduced into our church in the contamination of a corrupt New England Puritanism, as we sincerely believe, nothing more solemnly interesting has been brought before our people. At the time of this writing, our readers will have had full time to read and reflect upon it; they will, therefore, be prepared to receive intelligently, and judge candidly, the few suggestions we now offer on the whole subject.

This declaration is, in general terms, a solemn protest against the new principles concerning the duty of the Church to the State, and the power of the State over the Church, introduced in the Assembly of 1861, and developed through the succeeding four years to their culmination in the Assembly of 1865. It declares these principles to be heretical to such a degree, that by them "the whole mediatorial glory and dignity of the Messiah, and all the offices of Prophet, Priest and King, which he exercises for the salvation of his people are subverted and surrendered."

By way of exposition and elucidation of this general indictment, fourteen specifications are cited, out of the acts and utterances of the Assembly, from 1861 to 1865, viz: The doctrine of the Assembly, that Church Courts are competent to decide upon questions of State policy; the doctrine that the Church, as such, owes allegiance to human rulers or governments; the doctrine that the Scriptures, in enjoining subjection to the higher powers, teach the duty of "passive obedience" to any and every act of tyrants; the semi-infidel humanitarian doctrine of the slavery minute of 1864, in face of the previous solemn judgments of the Assembly; the calumnious imputation upon the church's previous labors for the evangelization of the negroes in face of her own recorded testimony on the subject; the shaping and conforming of the church's acts and deliverances to the civil and military policy of secular rulers; the blasphemous perversions of Providential events as a means of interpreting God's word; the sanction, by the church, of the usurpations of the civil and military power over the ordinances of worship and government in the church; the practical alliance of the church with the State; the persecution of the witnesses for the truth against these errors; the perversion of the Gospel commission to preach the Gospel to secular and partisan purposes; the outlawry of the Southern Churches on a false charge touching their motive and purpose in withdrawing from us; the setting up of an ecclesiastical Star Chamber above the Presbyteries in the Board of Missions; and finally, against movements looking prospectively to an utter confounding of Church and State, or subordinating one to the other.

These errors are testified against as contrary to the word of God and subservient of its inspiration and authority; contrary to the constitution and symbols of the church; contrary to the Divine ordinance specially sundering the spiritual from the secular government; contrary to the good name and influence of the church in society; contrary to peace and fellowship among brethren of the same household, both ecclesiastical and political; and contrary to the unity and purity of the Church of God.

Such are the substantial points of this document. That it will cause a general howl among the fanatical radicals who have obtained a temporary ascendancy in the church; a trembling uneasiness among the good but timid men whose love for the truth is held in subjection by their fears; and grave doubts and exceptions among the advocates of expediency and compromise as the great weapon for defence of truth, we can readily imagine. That the wiser and more courageous witnesses for the truth, will rejoice that a standard has at last been lifted up against the enemy coming in like a flood; and that, in time to come, all good and true sons of the church will look back to this Declaration and Testimony, as they have been wont to look back to the "Act and Testimony" with reverence and high satisfaction, we most confidently believe.

The issue having thus been joined between the conservative witnesses for the truth and the innovating radicals in the church, it may be well to fix attention on the real points involved in the struggle: the more so, because both the passion and the imbecility to which the radical organs of the church seem to have been given over, incapacitate them to comprehend, even if they intended to state fairly, the nature and results of the controversy. The disgraceful, but characteristic littleness of the attack upon Louisville Presbytery touching its adoption of this paper, from Danville in

alliance with the pitiable little composition of self-conceit, notoriety-hunting, and wrong-headedness who constituted the minority of one in the Presbyterian; the intimations in the organs of different factions of the radical party, that a schism is in process of hatching in Kentucky; and the comforting assurance that the parties engaged in it can "be readily spared" from the church, all indicate clearly enough, both the incapacity of these men to comprehend the nature of the struggle thus begun, and the spirit in which they will carry on the warfare.

Now, all such antagonists may at once make themselves easy, under the assurance, that the authors and signers of the "Declaration and Testimony" have not the remotest intention of constituting a "schism," or of being "spared" from the church of their fathers. So far from any dark, mysterious, strategical ambiguities in their utterance, they declare with singular boldness and plainness, their purpose to be the reformation of, not separation from, the church, as in the following language:

"By the blessing of God upon our efforts in this behalf, we shall not despair of so rallying the friends of a Pure and Free Church around the banner which God has given us "to be displayed because of the Truth" as to be able to defeat, in a great measure, the schemes of those who seem by their acts to be saying concerning the beautiful and holy temple of our fathers, Raze it, raze it, even to the foundations thereof."

"We desire our deliberate purpose, trusting in God, who can save by few as well as many, to use our best endeavors to bring back the church of our fathers to her ancient purity and integrity, upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, and of our only King, Priest and Prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ. In this endeavor we pledge ourselves to assist and co-operate with each other."

If a majority of our church are against us, (as we have too much reason to apprehend it is,) they will, we suppose, in the end, see the infatuation of their course, and retrace their steps; or they will at last, attempt to cut us off. If the former, we shall bless the God of Jacob; if the latter, we desire to stand ready, for the sake of Christ, and in behalf of the testimony now made to endure whatever suffering may be required of us by our Lord."

This solemn and earnest language is of itself the most effective rebuke of the miserable twaddle of strategists and imbeciles concerning dark plots of schism by men "who can be spared." If the Lord in His just anger has not given the church over to hopeless apostasy, we confidently expect the church "readily to spare" the real schismatics who have brought the present ruin upon her, and let them "go to their own place"—that common sewer of corrupt mongrel Yankee Presbyterianism—known as New-Schoolism. It was doubtless anticipated, if not primarily intended, by the leaders of the Assembly at Pittsburgh, that their measures would force into stout resistance and ultimate withdrawal from the church, the body of men whose courage and conscience made them formidable antagonists, and thereby leave them to the easy task of subjugating the consciences of the timid, compromising, passive body of "celestial" who might remain among them. But they altogether misjudged and mistook the men who opposed them. Their opposition grew out of their love for the old church and her constitution, and their practical doctrine is not secession, but battle for the rights as the children of their fathers under the constitution of their fathers. If they are vanquished in that battle and "cast out," then the schism is not of their making; and the very process of casting them out will send out the true church with them.

A word or two concerning the bearing of this struggle upon the question of the re-union of the severed parts of the church, may not be out of place here. For manifestly it has a very obvious, though indirect bearing upon that question, as the recent developments of a true policy in the Episcopal Church, in striking contrast with the infamously foolish and wicked policy of the Pittsburgh shows.

Most opportunely for the Episcopal Church North, the venerable Hopkins, of Vermont, was in an official position at the close of the civil war, to extend the olive branch to his brethren in the South, and did so in a letter which is likely to shed a lustre on his name that may well seem to him a glorious compensation for all the calumnies of his fanatical brethren in Pennsylvania. In response to this kind call from one whom they could specially confide, the yearnings of fraternal affection, were at once awakened in the hearts of his brethren—soe as their hearts were—and already from Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Arkansas and Texas, has gone forth an utterance which settles practically the point, that the severed Episcopal Church of the United States shall speedily be one again. If in like manner the Assembly of 1865—met after the civil war was closed—had been inspired with the spirit of semi-infidel humanitarianism, which had already wrought out so much evil, then would the Presbyterian Church have been as speedily reunited, and no such "Declaration and Testimony" had been needed. For grave had been the errors of previous Assemblies up to that time, the return of the spirit of brotherly kind-

ness, made the means, by the Spirit of God, of a revival of love for the truth, and of casting out the humanitarian heresy, would have healed the backslidings of the church without the necessity of further strife.

But the murderous spirit of the Pittsburgh Assembly, has compelled the friends of union and of truth, even as a measure of Christian expediency, over and above the considerations of duty to testify against error, to make this solemn declaration against the heresies that caused the separation, by way of preliminary assurance to their Southern brethren, that if the yearnings of their hearts for the old church of their fathers prompt them to return, they will find there still brethren who are ready to unite with them in the struggle for the truth, against fanaticism, as in days of yore. In this aspect of the case—and only in this aspect of it, has the Declaration and Testimony an immediate bearing on the question of separation.

We have already extended our remarks beyond the proper limits of one article, and yet we cannot conclude without a few brief hints to our more timid brethren, concerning their duty in the present crisis:

1. It is very doubtful whether there is not yet a majority in the church, who in heart endorse generally the principles of this Declaration and Testimony; and, therefore, it needs only outspoken plainness of speech and courageous action to relieve the church of the evil influences which now oppress her.

2. It is not a question of going out with a small "schism," as our enemies will pretend, but a question of reforming the church. The real issue is, will you aid in getting the church back to her old conservative ground, and thereby prepare for re-union with our separated brethren, who hold the like precious faith which we can readily spare."

3. It is no just ground for declining to co-operate in this movement, that there may be minor statements or views in the details of the "Declaration and Testimony" to which you take exception. It is the trick of errorists, and particularly of errorists of the New England type, to get, first, an emasculated statement of the differences between truth and error; and then to secure a compromise upon points of comparative unimportance, whilst the main points and those the vital ones, are really given up. But let it be borne in mind, that the simple question now submitted, and which you are called upon to decide, is, are you in favor of a reform of the abuses and a suppression of the heresies generally indicated in this paper?

4. It can surely no longer be plead that this movement is precipitate. Ever since 1861, the bolder friends of the truth have listened to the plea, wait, wait! Had their counsels been followed even as late as 1862, it is probable that the action of 1864 and 1865 would not have been taken by the General Assembly, nor the godless action of the State of Missouri have silenced practically the gospel there—nor many of the persecutions have been inflicted upon God's people, over which we mourn.

5. Moderation, be it remembered, has ever been the peculiar bane of the Presbyterian Church, as witness her history in Scotland in successive centuries past.

The most dangerous enemies of the truth are not the open enemies who boldly assail her, but the treacherous friends who from fear or love of ease, or indifference betray her in the hour of battle.

6. The method suggested of showing

how every office-bearer stands on this

great question, by giving his adherence

to this "Declaration and Testimony," is

simple, direct, and every way fair.

Better than any other mode of expression does it enable the friends of truth to know each other. It was eminently successful in 1837. We trust it will prove as successful now.

Celestial brethren in Kentucky kindly invited out of the church.

We find in the Presbyterian, Sept. 20th,

the following very significant hints to

the good brethren in Kentucky, who

have for four years past, been laboriously stultifying themselves and destroying the confidence of the people in their

sincerity, by vain efforts to soothe the

"Satanic" verberus in the Church with a sop.

Taken in connection with the Presbyterian's hint, that there are those in

Kentucky "whom we can readily spare,"

we are led to conclude that the Northern brethren are becoming rather anxious to get rid of Kentucky, doubtless

on the ground that one part of the

church there will be hard to manage,

while the remainder—the strategists—

which could be managed, is a sort of

material hardly worth keeping. Says the "Presbyterian".

The great conflict in our church in

Kentucky will occur in the Synod, which

is to meet on Wednesday, Oct. 11th, in

the city of Louisville. The result is

doubtful. The parties are nearly equally divided. We hope that the questions at issue will be fully understood, and that each man will go for his principles. It will be a great damage to our church if in this division in Kentucky, men remain with us who are not with us in sentiment and spirit. The views of the church are expressed in the "Declaration and Testimony" of 1865. They are plain documents, and there is no need of misunderstanding them. It is

not to be desired that those who charge in these acts the church has become apostate, should remain in our fellowship, as they will feel it to be their duty to keep up agitation. We want peace, and it can be found only in separation. We ought to take it for granted that those who differ from us, are honest in their opinions, and that they have the right to act upon their convictions.

"If all who are anxious to adhere to our church in Kentucky had taken a decided stand, and had thrown aside all strategy three years ago, the division would have been on principle. As it is, we fear that not a few will adhere to our Assembly who are at heart opposed to our noble deliverances on the war and on slavery, and that they will find themselves away from home, and we shall find among us brethren who do not concur in us, and whose sentiments we repudiate."

A Church with Church enough and to spare.

The Presbyterian of Sept. 16th, seeks to evade the force of our view of the "situation ecclesiastical," by the petty trick of contrasting it, as a "false and foolish judgment" in one extreme, with the twaddle of some simpleton "correspondent" on the other extreme, touching a prayer meeting in Nashville; and, in contradiction to our general statement of the decline of our cause at the principle centres of influence at the North, avers that "a brief comparison of statistics will show that more persons were added to these decaying and discordant churches by a profession of faith in Christ in 1864, than in 1857." Moreover, the Presbyterian regards our remarks as "foreshadowing a schism," which he would have it understood his friends are prepared for, and by way of anticipation, administers the consolation "that it will be mainly confined to Kentucky if it is consummated, and will rapidly spread."

A Plausible and Dangerous Dogma Exposed.

"Slavery, if not dead is moribund, and therefore it is useless and vain to urge the duty of testifying against the Infidel doctrine of abolitionism, and to insist upon the repeal of the anti-scriptural deliverances of the Assembly on this subject." Such is the form of argument now employed by those who have either openly or secretly aided in the unchristian crusade against the Church and word of God, which has deluged our land in blood, and threatens to overturn all the foundations of faith and social order. Flimsy and illogical and infidel as this argument is, it is just plausible enough to be liable to mislead those who are not in the habit of very accurate reasoning. A moment's reflection, however, on the part of such, will enable them to see how shallow is the plea thus put forward, for the maintenance of a heresy, that has wrought such havoc already, both in the Church and in the State, and of whose ruinous influences the end is not yet. The argument is based upon several most glaring assumptions of the correctness of principles which are false and ruinous. In the first place, it assumes that the teachings of God's word are true only when surrounding circumstances are in harmony with them, but when the multitude depart from those teaching, and by their traditions and commandments of men and wicked practices make void the Law, then the Law ceases to be true or binding, or its interpretation must be accommodated to the change. If the practice of men and their teaching are such as to kill the word of God, then it is to be considered dead, and to insist upon the truth of its teaching is useless. As, for example, amongst the Mormons, the institution of marriage as recognized in the Scriptures, is dead or moribund, and therefore the testifying against polygamy in Utah would be useless. In the second place, the argument assumes that the truth or falsehood of antagonistic principles can be determined by the sword. That the success of arms, superiority in the use of bayonets and bombs, settles the doctrines for or against which the Church as God's witness is to testify. Thus according to the argument, Protestantism having been killed out by the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and it having thereby become manifest that God was on the side of Rome, those who still tried to bear testimony to the word of God, and to reform the Church in France, were rebellious schismatics and fools, trying to reverse the effects, moribund, rotten carcass of a dead Protestantism. So, too when the right of the French nation to govern itself, and reject the house of Bourbon, was laid "moribund" upon the plains of Waterloo by the sword of England, Napoleonism was dead, and the doctrine of "legitimacy" was proved to be according to the will of God, and the Church ought to have required all those not in cordial sympathy with that doctrine, to repent or be cast out. In the third place, the argument is based upon the principle that the Church of God is to bear witness only to such parts of the revealed will of God, as from time to time may be recognized as His will by the dominant party in the Church, or community, and what is not so recognized is to be treated as a dead letter. This principle, once fallacious and

verses the "cœur de rose" picture of the prosperity and advance of the Northern Church, we find a correspondent calling attention to the sad fact that the deaths in our ministry, in 1864, were sixty-four as against only fifty-four new candidates for the ministry under the Board of Education; thus indicating a gradual extinction of the ministry itself!

We care not, however, to enter into any controversy upon such a subject. It gives us no pleasure to dwell upon the sad evidences of declension and depletion in the church. The general tone of the public journals and of leading public men of the country, as well as the private expressions of sorrow and disengagement from the more thoughtful pastors of the church attest but too indisputably the correctness of our general statement.

But if further evidence were needed, what could be more conclusive evidence of general declension, than the professing readiness of a respectable journal in the church "to spare" a part thereof, in the consciousness of exuberant strength? It was cited as the conclusive proof of declension in a church, by the Lord and Head of the Church himself. "Thou sayest I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Whether the Presbyterian's readiness "to spare" a part of the church in Kentucky be understood in the sense of insulting bravado, or of real conviction, it is equally indicative of the very state of decline which he so angrily denies. For if it is understood in the former sense, it implies a degree of reckless passion and malignity of heart that treats the communion of saints with contempt; if in the latter, a degree of fidelity

ignorance or weakness of head that is incapable of appreciating the importance of the communion of saints as a prime article of Christian faith and practice; and, therefore, the impossibility of avoiding the disintegration of the church.

We deem it scarce worth while to add,

that our view of the "situation ecclesiastical," neither intended nor pretended to "foreshadow schism" of any sort, unless it be that indirectly, a schism shall be made by the Presbyterian and his friends, in consequence of the restoration of the church to her ancient faith and practice. Nor need we waste time upon the question of the Presbyterian's sincerity and consistency in warning the Southern Churches two weeks previously against the error of schismatically continuing a separate body, as contrasted with this present kind hint to the churches of Kentucky, that they will "readily be spared" if they are not ready to submit in silence to the orders of their lordly brethren of the Satanic party at the North.

The Western Presbyterian and the Declaration and Testimony.

We are glad to see that the "Western Presbyterian" has published in full the "Declaration and Testimony" signed by some twenty-five names, and adopted by the Presbyterian of Louisville, at its late meeting at Bardstown. This Declaration seems to have scared the "strategists" at Danville pretty badly, judging from the many random shots they have fired at it without ever once hitting it. It is quite amusing to see how they fluctuate at a little straightforward remonstrance against the unscriptural and unconstitutional acts and deliverances of the General Assembly, when it appears in the form of a "Declaration and Testimony," though they may say "strategically" and sometimes confidentially, that they themselves disapprove of these acts, and characterize them as a departure from the ancient doctrine of the Church, but seem generally to be satisfied with simply calling these acts "unwise" and "inexpedient."

The last number of the "Western Presbyterian" reminds us of certain political journals, which, on the eve of some city election, are filled up with paragraphs urging their party to "vote early," to "look out for frauds," to "watch the polls," &c. &c. The "Western Presbyterian" has no less than six editorials telling their readers what naughtily people the signers of this Declaration are, and what mischief they are plotting against the Church. They call upon the people to come to the rescue, and save the Ark of God from the pollution of these "schismatics," and give it into the hands of those who will guard its purity—though whether it will be done upon "strategy" or "principle," they do not affirm. We presume, however, that they only expect to guard it as it has been guarded by them for the past four years—for they hold out no promise of any improvement in their vigilance.

Strategists have sometimes overreached themselves; and we think our Danville brethren have accomplished that feat in this instance, in publishing the "Declaration and Testimony." They might have made their readers believe that this document was something very bad—something calculated to do much harm in the Church; but as they have published it, their attempt to weaken its force by such means, will only strengthen it, if their readers are capable of reasoning at all. And we are perfectly willing to let the document itself be an answer to all they have said against it.

We give our readers the headings of these editorials, which show that they are terribly alarmed by the powerful arguments set forth in the Declaration. They are as follows, to-wit: "The Declaration of War against

## Free Christian Commonwealth

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All communications touching the paper, whether business or otherwise—addressed to

A. DAVIDSON, AG't., and Publisher,

Louisville, Ky.

The members of Synod, upon their arrival in the city, will report themselves at the Chestnut Street Church, corner of Fourth and Chestnut Streets, where a committee will be in attendance to conduct them to the homes assigned them. Those who have been specially invited to particular places, will of course go to those places.

We trust our Presbyterian people of Louisville will abundantly manifest their hospitality, in providing homes for the members of Synod during its sessions here. It is the general impression that there will be a full attendance; and we hope ample provision will be made to entertain as many as may be present.

The Second Presbyterian Church of this city, after being closed for several weeks, for repairs, was again opened for divine service on last Sabbath. The fresco work is very beautiful, and the whole appearance of the building is greatly improved.

### Information Wanted!

Our friends of the "Western Presbyterian," like blind men groping for the wall, are very much in want of information in regard to various matters touching the origin, signing, adoption, intent, &c., of the "Declaration and Testimony." Relying on such correspondents as "J. P. M.," it is not surprising they should be very much misled in regard to facts. In due time, however, they will probably be fully satisfied upon all points relating to this Testimony, which has put them into such a sad and rather ludicrous flurry. For the present we will set their minds at ease, if possible, with respect to the origin of this paper. It did not originate in Kentucky, nor with the Louisville Presbytery at all, but in a very different quarter—one which, if known to the Danville editors and professors, would not be likely, we imagine, to allay their very natural alarm, in view of the probabilities of the future.

### Where are the Records of Transylvania Presbytery?

The editors of the Western Presbyterian seem to be very much exercised because we did not publish the whole proceedings of Louisvillle Presbytery in the first issue of our paper after that meeting was held. The statement of the Clerk of Presbytery will we trust, leave their minds upon that score. Though we care nothing about it, we may retort, and say: where are the records of Transylvania Presbytery?

Some of the brethren in that Presbytery are beginning to ask that question, and wonder why they have not appeared in the Western Presbyterian. We give an extract from a business letter just received from one of the members of that Presbytery. He says, speaking of the terror which has taken hold of the Danville editors: "Bro Yerkes, of Danville is wonderfully scared up. I laugh as I see him with distended lip blowing his trumpet of alarm. In the last number of the Western Presbyterian he blows awhile, seemingly drops his trumpet for a moment, and then grasps it to give another blast, for fear the former one was not heard."

It is a wonder he dont publish the minutes of Transylvania. He does not even allude to the fact that there was such a gathering. Dr. Rice's old cry was: "Where is Milly McPherson?" We will have to cry: "Where is Transylvania Record?"

### Help for the Laborers.

EDITORS COMMONWEALTH: I propose to lay before your readers two cases, which should demand the attention of, and a response from all of God's people.

A letter from Richmond, Va., about a month ago, presented this case:

"We have some eleven young men, licentiates, who are now supplying desultite fields of labor where the people

an excellent preacher, and could get an abundant support if he were well."

Christian readers, remember the winter is fast approaching. In your abundance, remember the Lord's poor.

Persons in or near the city desiring to aid in this matter, will leave their contributions with A. Davidson, Third, between Market and Jefferson streets, who will forward them. Congregations desiring to make up boxes, can send them by Express, to Mrs. E. H. Brown, care of Moses D. Hoge, corner Main and 5th, Richmond, Va. Persons sending may rest assured that Mrs. Brown will make the distribution according to directions.

Truly yours, C. H. DOBBS.

### Presbytery of Louisville.

EDITORS COMMONWEALTH: The Presbytery of Louisville closed its sessions Saturday, Sept. 2d, and according to your request, I hastened to make out for your paper to be printed the Wednesday following, such an abstract of the proceedings, as I was then able to do. Some of the documents at that time were not in my hands; for example, the "Declaration and Testimony," adopted by Presbytery in my absence, and as I understood that you intended to publish that action in your next issue, I thought it would speak for itself then. The records of Presbytery touching that matter is as follows:

"After being read it was received, and on motion of ruling elder D. McCullough, to adopt the ayes and noes were called, and with the following result:

**MINISTERS.** Elders. C. A. Wickliffe, S. Cassedy, J. Watson, G. Glass, D. L. Brooks, W. T. McElroy, G. C. Cowie, W. L. Nourse, S. R. Wilson, S. V. Cosby, S. B. McPhee, J. McKinley, J. Johnson.

**NATE.** Elders. None. Nates.—

In taking this vote, M. Hardin was excused from voting, because he had not sufficiently examined the paper, and wished time. J. V. Harbison was excused from voting, for the reason, that while in favor of the principal part of the paper, there were some points in it which he did not approve of. G. Berger was also excused from voting. The Moderator, Rev. W. V. Duncan, asked and obtained leave to record his vote, and voted yea on the paper referred to.

Rev. S. R. Wilson, D. D., Rev. W. T. McElroy and A. Davidson, Esq., Louisville, were appointed a Committee to have the oversight of the collection and disbursement of moneys for Ministers and Churches in Missouri, as referred to in the abstract published Sept. 7, in the Commonwealth.

The Presbytery was desirous to do as much as possible for the spread of the gospel in its bounds; it was ordered further, that the Stated Clerk ascertain and publish the names and Post-office of the Standing Committee of Presbytery on Domestic Missions.

Rev. W. C. Mathews, D. D., Chairman, Shelbyville, Ky.

Rev. D. T. Stuart, Shelbyville, Ky. " J. P. McMillan, " " S. B. McPhee, D. D., "

Elders. Henry Offutt, " " J. V. Harbison, " " J. C. Brown, " "

The Presbytery reaffirms the policy adopted in Shelbyville, April 10, 1862—which was as follows:

In accordance with the action of the Synod of Kentucky, and the suggestion of the Missionary Committee of Presbytery, it is hereby Resolved, 1. That hereafter missionaries of this Presbytery be commissioned by the Presbytery's Committee on Missions, under the general direction of Presbytery.

2. That the funds raised for Domestic Missionary purposes be remitted to the Treasurer of Presbytery, to be by him held and disbursed as a Missionary fund distinct from other funds of Presbytery.

3. That funds for the payment of Missionaries be paid by the Treasurer on the order of the chairman of the committee of Missions.

4. That it be earnestly urged on the Churches of the Presbytery to make liberal provision for the funds of Domestic Missions, not only for Missionaries in our own bounds, but to aid the work in other destitute portions of the Church.

A. Davidson, Louisville, is the Treasurer of Presbytery.

ROBERT MORRISON, Stated Clerk.

For the Free Christian Commonwealth.

### The Presbytery of Ebenezer,

Met in Washington, Sept. 12, at 7 o'clock, and was opened with a sermon by the Moderator, Rev. J. M. Worrall, from Rev. ii: 5—Rev. B. M. Hobson, was chosen Moderator, and Rev. J. P. Hendrick, temporary Clerk.

Mr. S. M. Schofield, a licentiate under care of Presbytery was dismissed to the care of the Presbytery of Columbus, Ohio, also, Mr. S. H. Howe to the care of the Presbytery of Vincennes.

The work, we believe, began first to manifest itself in the Methodist Church, and the result so far is twenty-eight additions to that church. The Presbytery Church has received nineteen upon profession of their faith, and a number are asking to be admitted to the Baptist Church. Our informant states that the works still going on, and that many anxious souls are asking that God's people shall pray for them. Rev. H. B. Bowditch, is pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Gallatin.

The Presbyterian Church at Bowling Green, Ky., is also enjoying a precious season of revival. At the time of this writing there have been ten or twelve hopeful professions, and upwards of twenty-five more are yet anxious. This Church has been in a remarkably healthy condition during the whole war. The pastor announced at the last communion, that he was now advancing far into the seventh year of his ministry—all this time he has been their pastor—holding regular communion every three months, and they had never yet celebrated the supper with outreaching some person into the Church on profession of their faith.

MARRIED,

September 25, 1865, by Rev. J. V. Cosby, at the residence of the bride's father, in Bardstown, Ky., Mr. Thos. A. Bates, of Covington, Ky., and Miss Emma L. Hackley.

BY REV. STUART ROBINSON.

For sale by A. Davidson, 303 Third street, Louisville.—Price 50 cents. It will be sent by mail pre-paid, on receipt of the price.

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THE NEXT SESSION OF THIS INSTITUTION

will commence on the first MONDAY of SEPTEMBER, with a full Board of competent and successful teachers. The College Building, located in one of the most moral and intelligent communities in Kentucky, is a beautiful and commodious building, situated on the hill above the town, on the 23d of September, by Rev. Mr. Bushnell, at Calvary Church, Mr. Geronimus Bassett and Miss Mary L. Ostrom, both of this city.

At the residence of the bride's mother on the 26th September, 1865, by Rev. W. L. Breckinridge, Alpheo T. Pope and Mary Pope, daughter of the late Col. Curran Pope.

For particulars, apply at Shelbyville, Ky., to the Principal.

REV. D. T. STUART.

Aug. 10.

REV. D. T. STUART.

Aug.

## Free Christian Commonwealth.

### REVIEWS.

**THE ELEMENTS OF GENERAL HISTORY.**—By Rev. Jno. P. Carter, A.M., Principal, Ma., Collegiate Institute, Baltimore, 1863.

Such is the title of a small volume, which has been very recently laid on our table, and though we have not examined it as thoroughly as we desire, we are disposed to congratulate the whole fraternity of teachers in our Schools, Academies, and Collegiate Institutes, that just such work has been published. We are of the opinion that, for its size, it is, both as to the fulness of the matter contained in it and the judgment displayed in the selection of that matter, and as to the method of its arrangement, one of the completest compendiums we have ever seen. In the hands of an intelligent instructor, and the method indicated in the book being observed, we do not see how it can fail to inspire the young mind with a love of historical research, and form a basis for the accumulation of a large store of historical knowledge under the practical control of its possessor.

We know that teachers have long and deeply felt the need of such an outline as this, and when they have read this book, we feel sure they will thank us for calling attention to it, and much more, Mr. Carter for this pleasant and useful result of much thought on his part and many years of trial as a practical teacher of history.—The work is used by Rev. Mr. Cosby, at the Bardstown Female Academy, and he commends it in terms of high praise. We trust its merits will be examined, and that it will be introduced extensively into our schools.

**THE ELECTRIC MAGAZINE.**—for October—has been received. It contains nearly twenty different articles, most of which are quite interesting. There is also a collection of poetical pieces, and several short scientific and miscellaneous paragraphs. The present is the most interesting number of the Electric we have seen for some time. Terms \$5 per year. Address W. H. Bidwell, No. 5, Baekman St., New York.

Le Bon Ton, and Le Petit Messager—for October—have also come to hand.—These magazines are designed to give the latest French fashions. In addition to patterns already cut, which accompany each number, they are embellished with many figures representing the latest style of dress for ladies.

S. T. Taylor, 349, Canal Street, New York, is the publisher.

GODLY LADY'S BOOK.—for October—has come to hand, containing its usual amount of interesting reading matter, with the latest fashions. Address L. A. Godey, Philadelphia. Terms \$3, a year in advance.

For the Free Christian Commonwealth.

### Louisville Annual Conference.

The Louisville Annual Conference convened at Russellville, Ky., on the 20th of Sept., and closed a most harmonious session on Tuesday, the 26th.

The number in attendance was unusually large, and the Spirit of love and brotherly kindness seemed to fill every heart. It was truly refreshing to witness so many manifestations of Christian affection in these days of contention and strife. The Conference re-affirmed with great unanimity its strong attachment to the M. E. Church South, and declared its intention to "stand by her fortunes, whether they be prosperous or adverse." The Bible, Tract, Sunday School and Missionary causes received a large share of attention.

The citizens of all denominations threw open their houses and churches to the ministers, and seemed to vie with one another in their efforts to make all comfortable and happy.

The public services of the last night were peculiarly impressive. Dr. Linn, after drawing a most touching, sadly-sweet picture of the last hours of the Son of man, bade the ministers meet around the table and celebrate His dying love. Afterwards the preachers, mothers, wives, and daughters came forward and communed. The solemn, happy scene will never be forgotten by those present. The Spirit of the most High rested upon the people, and many a loving heart felt the cleansing blood of Jesus re-applied, and many a noble soul consecrated his all to the cause and service of his blessed Master. Thus ended the most pleasant and most profitable Conference session we ever attended. The next session will be held at Elizabethtown, Ky.

The following resolutions were adopted with great unanimity:

WHEREAS, The question of a re-union of the M. E. Church and the M. E. Church South has been extensively discussed by both the ministry and the press of the M. E. Church; and,

WHEREAS, It is due to the congregations we serve, as well as to ourselves, that we make a full and unmistakable record of our views and purposes on this subject; therefore,

Resolved, 1st. By the Louisville Annual Conference, that the M. E. Church South was organized that Methodism in its primitive purity might be maintained; and to aid in the accomplishment of this object we, according to the provisions of the plan of separation, adopted by the General Conference of 1844, attached ourselves to the M. E. Church South.

2d. That we establish a connection with the M. E. Church South from its organization, enjoying its blessings, and preaching its truths, in its name as we have seen, the church of our choice, our houses and our love; and by its past history, so full of success and so replete with moral and religious achievements, by its present purpose not to know anything among men save "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," and by its hope of contributing its portion, with other Evangelical Churches, in enlightening, elevating, and saving mankind, we reaffirm our devotion to its principles, and pledge ourselves to stand by its fortunes, whether they be prosperous or adverse.

3d. That we have read with profound pleasure the address recently published by the Bishops of our Church, and do

most heartily approve the sentiments therein expressed.

4th. That the President, the Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors and Councils of States, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States, and by the Constitutions of their respective States; and the said States are a sovereign and independent nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

5th. That we desire to cultivate fraternal intercourse with all denominations of Evangelical Christians, and, as far as possible, to "live peaceably with all men."

A. H. REDFORD,  
N. H. LEE.

### Second Sabbath in New York—Impressions of a Western Man.

#### DEAR COMMONWEALTH:

On Sabbath, August 20th, I again turned my steps to the Fifth Avenue, which is as remarkable for the number and splendor of its churches as for any thing else. I could not but admire the massive stone buildings, surmounted by every variety of steeple and spire, but as far as I was able to walk, they were all silent as the dead, the silver-toned bells invited nobody to enter, and the gates were closed. What shall I do? I had heard in my way up town, a church bell in an obscure street, but it is now too far to go back. Hark! there sound from the East of me at intervals, sonorous notes. I turn down Nineteenth street, and steer in the direction of those voluminous tones—on reaching the Fourth Avenue, I discover that they proceed from the Catholic Cathedral. It is not closed, nor do I suppose that any churches of that denomination are closed. If the regular Priest is not there, some one is there, and there is always a service. But I had no desire to go to the Cathedral, and turning up Fourth Avenue, "brought up" at a building of singular architecture, which people were entering. It was Dr. Bellows' Church, (Unitarian). I took a seat, and had a minute to contemplate the situation before the preacher ascended the pulpit. The church, at a little distance from the vestibule, swells into a circular form, and is lighted chiefly by a large dome. There is on the pulpit a sounding board in the form of a sea shell, in the concavity of which is painted a cross, and round the cross radiate rays of light, giving at first glance, the impression of a great (I suppose the sleepless) eye. The preacher was a stranger, whose name I did not hear. The congregation was respectable, but did not half fill the church, and the service was conducted with great decency. The first hymn was "Long have I sat beneath the sound," and the collection contains many hymns which are in our own, some being somewhat altered. One part of the service consisted in reciting the Apostles' creed, the congregation all standing as they do in the Episcopal Church. The prayer was not distinguishable from what is heard in most orthodox churches. One of the petitions was "may we by daily obedience enter into the Redeemer's peace," and the conclusion was "which we the disciples of Jesus ask for his sake, who is the Son and our Saviour."

The text was Matt. 25 and 25—And I was afraid and went and hid thy talents in the earth, lo thou hast that is thine. On this was read, and well read, a very beautiful composition, just half an hour long, which is, I suppose, the statute measure established by public opinion in all the churches. The object was much the same as that of the composition of the same length which I heard read in the dark stone church on the previous Sabbath, viz.: To set men as men, that is, just as the speaker found them on a course of self-exertion for the improvement of their character, which is certainly a very good, and highly desirable thing. The composition was more ornate than the one of the previous Sabbath, as the Unitarian clergy, from long usage and a specific education to that end, have more nearly approached the standard perfection of the popular Lecture, than the orthodox who have only recently turned their talents in that direction. There was great beauty in some of the figures employed. I must quote one or two from that part of the discourse in which the preacher sought to reconcile his hearers to the fact that some of their talents must go to waste, and never be used at all. After exhausting all the arguments supplied by the analogy of the human body in those muscles which are never brought into full play, &c., he appealed to the analogy of nature. There are, said he, "so many men that find themselves in the wrong place; but then also, there are thousands of trees capable of being hewn into noble masts, which rot on their native hills, and thousands of streams are wasting their waters which are capable of turning mills."

On the other hand, judging of this composition as an exhibition of the gospel, or in any Scriptural sense, a Christian discourse, it must be excluded from that category altogether. There was no textual connection traced—there was no reference whatever to the doom of this wicked and slothful servant pronounced upon him by his Lord, but on the contrary a considerable part of the discourse was taken up in recognising the necessity, and apologising for the practice of burying the talent, from the present state of society, in which there are more candidates than places, and in

which if (said the preacher,) you want to plant your acorn, you cannot do it where another man's acorn has already sprung into an oak—there is no room, the ground is pre-occupied. There was not, from beginning to end, one word about sin, nor about salvation; but all was highly genteel and decent, and the audience listened with marked attention, which was no great effort, for it was very beautiful. And when the blessing was pronounced, the genteel audience retired under the swelling notes of a grand organ, apparently with great satisfaction. I could not find any church open in the afternoon or evening, though I afterwards understood there were some had I known how to reach them; but Presbytery and Episcopacy are generally out of town at watering places and country retreats. I am sorry that I will not have an opportunity of hearing them when they return in their full health, to teach the thousands of the great Metropolis, and to hear what they teach them. The gospel, I must hope, is still in some of the pulpits, though many are not backward to say that the clergy preach to please their congregations, and some have their ire instantly and unbecomingly stirred up if you venture the least suspicion about the integrity of the present state of things. One old lady, the widow of a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, asked me if I had been at church. I answered that I had been at several, and that I desired very much to discover whether the good old gospel was preached with plainness in the churches of New York. She told me with great tartness that it was, and that it was preached as plainly as it ought to be. The manner of her observation precluded me from any inquiry as to what she meant by "as plainly as it ought to be," and I was left to reflect as I might, on the obscurity which to this day hangs over God's mercy to the chief of sinners, through Jesus Christ our Lord. I am sorry that circumstances do not permit me to wander longer among the churches of New York, but I must leave for home, and I do leave impressed over and above what I have already said, that there is more than one half the population which the churches never touch at all, and I am candid enough to acknowledge that I do not see how they could. This population lives in boarding houses, theatres, restaurants and saloons. How is the minister to enter these places? They have not time to listen. Every thing is driving at a steam rate, and you might as well enter a mill and ask its machinery to stop a while till you talk to it. We talk about caste in heathen countries, and the women not being approachable by the missionaries, on account of their retirement, but in our own great cities neither women nor men are approachable on account of their business. They are running a great race in the competition of life, and they cannot pause. There are thousands also, which have not a minute to themselves but the limited time which is allotted to sleep. And the decent multitude who have built the churches, and attend the churches, are also too much immersed in business, to give much place to religion in their homes.

Be these things as they may, the newspapers recount just now, in the city, a fearful list of defalcations, thefts and embezzlements, to the largest amounts, and perpetrated for the most part too, by men of high standing, some of whom figured in the churches, and one of whom in the city of Brooklyn, was superintendent of a Sabbath school. If the old scriptural teaching were for the improvement of their character, which is certainly a very good, and highly desirable thing. The composition was more ornate than the one of the previous Sabbath, as the Unitarian clergy, from long usage and a specific education to that end, have more nearly approached the standard perfection of the popular Lecture, than the orthodox who have only recently turned their talents in that direction. There was great beauty in some of the figures employed. I must quote one or two from that part of the discourse in which the preacher sought to reconcile his hearers to the fact that some of their talents

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We publish below a letter which we clip from the New York "Observer," written by Rev. J. M. Stevenson, D.D., Secretary of the American Tract Society. It is a sad picture, and is in striking contrast with the statement made by the late General Assembly, that "the national honor is untarnished by acts of barbarism or cruelty." The letter is headed thus:

#### Devastation by our Army.

BY REV. J. M. STEVENSON, D. D.,  
Secretary Am. Tract Society.

BEAUFORT, N. C., July 8, 1865.

In reporting what I see and hear in

the South, leaving your readers to draw their own conclusions, I should say more of the devastations of the Federal armies. A distinction should be made among our own armies. Fremont's, Hunter's, Sherman's, and the negro troops, are spoken of as the most fearful in their ravages. I do not speak of ordinary foraging in an enemy's country, for the purpose of living as you pass through it, nor of taking horses and mules to supply the place of those falling out by exhaustion; this is right, necessary, in the system of warfare we have been compelled to wage. Nor of the wholesale destruction of public property, railroads, mills, canals, &c.; this is also justified by the laws of civilized warfare. Nor of the burning of houses from which shots had been fired upon our advancing troops; this is perhaps a necessity. Nor even of the wholesale destruction of everything which could be destroyed in the Shenandoah valley by Sheridan, under command of a superior; this was an exceptional case, and may have been winking at: for an army under such "splendid discipline" as ours (I have heard the term applied a hundred times to our armies by both federal and rebel) could have been restrained from all such excesses.

"At all events none but 'bummers,' engaged in robbery such as you describe." Then, I answer, they must have been very numerous to accomplish such fearful and wide spread ravages; and, whether few or many, they should have been driven from the army. I know of no excuse for such conduct.

But there is another class of devastations widely different from these, which have been perpetrated to an extent of which the North has little conception.

These may be classified, at first, *deliberate and systematic robbery for the sole of gain.*

Thousands of soldiers have gathered by violence hundreds of dollars each, some of them thousands, by sheer robbery. When they come to a house where an old man may be found whom the most rigid conscientious had not taken, they assume that he has gold or silver hidden, and demand it. If he gives up the treasure cheerfully he escapes personal violence. If he denies the possession of treasure and they believe him, he escapes. If they do not believe him they resort to violent means to compel its surrender. With a rope they will hang him until he is nearly gone, then let him down and demand the money—and this is repeated until he or they give up. Again, they will compel a man to "double quick" for one, two, three, four, until he sinks from exhaustion, and threaten him with death unless he reveals the hiding place of his riches. They prepare the torture, and all it contains, unless the money is forthcoming.

This robbery extends to other valuable in addition to money. Plate, silver spoons, silk dresses, elegant articles of the toilet, pistols, indeed whatever the soldier can take away and hopes to sell; these are gathered up and carried off to the extent sometimes of loading a wagon from one mansion. "What is done with these?" How many of them finally reach the North "by hook or by crook," I will not affirm; some through the soldier's mail, some wrapped up in the baggage of furloughed officers, some passed through the hands of the regular official, having the permit of the government.

A second form of devastation practised by some of our soldiers, consisted in the *wanton destruction of property which they could not use or carry away.* Of this I have the evidence of sight in some cases, of undoubted testimony in others. Plates cut to pieces with axes, elegant sofas broken and the fragments scattered about the grounds, paintings and engravings pierced with bayonets or slashed with swords, rosewood centre-tables, chairs, &c., broken to pieces and burned for fuel in cooking the food taken from the cellar or near house—these are the subjects of bitter complaint from hundreds of non-combatants, many of them undoubted true original Union men. "But would our soldiers wantonly destroy property of Union men?" Not surely because they were union men. But the claim of being such was often made untruly, and was therefore generally disbelieved by the soldier. If the claim were well founded, then the boldness and persistency with which it would be urged was taken as an offence, and the weaker party generally lost his money and had his property destroyed. The amount of property thus destroyed during the last year of the rebellion no one can tell. I have heard it estimated at hundreds of millions.

This robbery and wanton waste were specially trying to the people, not only because contrary to right and the laws of war, because it completed their utter and almost hopeless impoverishment. The depth of their losses and present want can hardly be overstated. In the proclamation of freedom to the slaves, their laborers, they lost what at the lowest figures they valued at two thousand millions of dollars. This might have been borne if the able bodied men of the white families had been at home to take the place of the released or absent idle freedmen, but they had been drawn into the war, many of them by a merciless conscription, and were now dead or hopelessly disabled for valuable labor on the farm. Further, four years of exhausting war had reduced the entire people to the barest necessities of life,—ladies of former wealth declared to me that they had lived on bread and water for two months at a time—others, that they had seen meat but once per week, no tea or coffee or sugar for months; the demands of the army, and the less efficient labor of the slaves during the war having cleaned out the granaries and meat houses of the entire population. Still more, the people are absolutely without money. The gold and silver have gone to Europe or the North, the State banks have ceased, the

said, "is the bairn, o' Tam Lutton, the collier. Ye ken Tam, sir?"

Mr. Gray did indeed know Tam, for he was the most notorious swearer, liar, and drunkard in the parish; and John did not require to say any more to show that he disbelieved the doctrine of the condemnation of infants.

"It's no only cruel and blasphemous," he continued, in a dry, sarcastic way, "but it's quite absurd. Jist tak' that bairn o' Tam as an example. According to their belief, it's lost; because we may, without any breach of charity, say that Tam is at present reprobate. But he is still in the place of hope, sir; and it is quite possible that he may be converted. What comes o' the bairn then? No, no," he added, looking gravely upward, "God is merciful, and Jesus died; and it was Him that said, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.'"

The minister took John's hand, and silently pressed it. He had got the key to his deeper nature, and was thrilled by its unexpected richness.

#### A New Catechism for the Freedmen.

We take the following extract from the Editorial correspondence of the Central Presbyterian, giving a very interesting account of the Sabbath School instruction given to the colored people in Virginia—and also the way the Yankees teach the freedmen:

Interesting statements were made from some of the churches concerning Sabbath Schools for colored people. On the Sabbath spent in Lexington, I attended the one maintained there, and was exceedingly gratified by what I saw. It was the one established, and long presided over by that holy man, our beloved Gen. Jackson, and in which, as in so many other things, he has left us a bright illustration of his "work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope."

"At all events none but 'bummers,' engaged in robbery such as you describe." Then, I answer, they must have been very numerous to accomplish such fearful and wide spread ravages; and, whether few or many, they should have been driven from the army. I know of no excuse for such conduct.

And then, if anything was wanting to fill up the cup of woe to these people, it was found in the conduct of some Confederate soldiers—especially Wheeler's cavalry, who were regarded as quite as heartless as the worst of their enemies. If rebellion against so good a government as ours was the sin of the ages, so has the punishment been of social liability, the innocent suffer with the guilty.

#### Infant Salvation—The Grave digger's argument.

The John Brown in the graveyard differed from the genial free hearty John Brown of the house and village. He was grave and taciturn in the discharge of his funeral duties, and watched over the place of tombs with a jealous care. This part of his character no one was surprised after all; for the church has, in its faithful care of this class of people, put into the school of some of its very best teachers. For example, I found such men as Col. Preston, of the Military Institute, and a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church, perfectly ignorant of the "work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope."

John Brown had a key to the secret of his soul centred on the enclosed two acres, which he had tended for twenty years. He regarded it with a pride, and even a love, as great as, and very similar to, that with which an amateur gardener looks upon his domain, and cherishes its floral treasures. Every new made grave was to John like a flower which he had planted, and it was added to his memory to the many hundreds which covered the surface of the enclosure, to be thought of and cherished according to the degree of respect and reverence which the sexton had for its inmate. As a gardener has his favorite flowers, so John had his favorite graves, and spent additional time on their adornment. Hence one grave might be seen with a smooth velvet turf, and a flower or two blooming upon it, while those surrounding it were covered with rank masses of grass; and, by looking at any one grave, it could be known what was the state of John's feelings towards the moulder dust beneath. His professional love was particularly lavished on the little graves, and on none other. Mr. Gray had not been long minister of the parish till he noticed the odd practice of his gravedigger; and one day when he came upon John smoothing and trimming the lonely bed of a child which had died a few days before, he asked him why he was so particular in dressing and keeping the graves of the children. John paused for a moment at his work, and looking up, not at the minister, but at the sky, said